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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
Thirteenth session
17 January-4 February 1994

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON ITS THIRTEENTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Teresita QUINTOS-DELES (Philippines)

II. ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. On 4 February 1994, the closing date of the thirteenth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 131 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979, and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York in March 1980. In accordance with article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. A list of States parties to the Convention is contained in annex ... to the present report.

B. Opening of the session

3. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held its thirteenth session from 17 January to 4 February 1994 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Committee held ... (233rd-...) plenary meetings and its two working groups each held ... closed meetings.

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4. The thirteenth session of the Committee was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Ivanka Corti (Italy), who had been elected at the twelfth session of the Committee in January 1993.

5. In her opening statement, Gertrude Mongela, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, stated that the Committee was considered one of the preparatory bodies of the World Conference on Women. The Conference was an opportunity for the Committee to assess the Convention's implementation.

6. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 had underscored the importance of women's rights as human rights, while at the same time expressing concern that, although women had the same human rights as men, they did not enjoy them as much as men did. The Declaration had also underlined the importance of the integration and full participation of women, as a human right, in the sustainable development process both as agents and beneficiaries, and had emphasized that new procedures should be adopted to strengthen implementation of the commitment to equality and human rights as they related to women. The Conference had asked both the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to examine the possibility of introducing the right of individual petition through the preparation of an optional protocol to the Convention and had asked the Committee to continue its review of those reservations that ran contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention or which were otherwise incompatible with international treaty law.

7. She stated that 131 States were now parties to the Convention and that Latin America and the Caribbean had become the first region where all States Members of the United Nations were parties to the Convention. She expressed the hope that other regions would also do so prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995. It would be a great affirmation of the world's commitment to the protection and implementation of human rights as they related to women if, by the time of the World Conference, the Convention became the first human rights instrument to achieve universal ratification without reservations.

8. The preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women meant that it would no longer be "business as usual" in programmes dealing with the advancement of women. As one of the preparatory bodies for the Beijing Conference, the Committee could contribute to its preparation by providing guidelines on how best to ensure that the human rights of women could be enjoyed.

C. Membership and attendance

9. All the members of the Committee, with the exception of Ryoko Akamatsu, attended the thirteenth session. However, Kongit Sinegiorgis (Ethiopia) attended the session from 26 January to 4 February and Rose N. Ukeje (Nigeria) from 20 January to 4 February 1994.

D. Adoption of the agenda

10. The Committee considered the provisional agenda (CEDAW/C/1994/1) at its 233rd meeting, on 17 January 1994. The agenda was discussed and adopted as follows:

1. Opening of the session.

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

3. Report of the Chairperson on the activities undertaken between the twelfth and the thirteen sessions of the Committee.

4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

5. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

6. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

7. Contributions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to international conferences.

8. Provisional agenda for the fourteenth session.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its thirteenth session.

E. Report of the pre-session Working Group

11. The Committee decided at its ninth session 1/ to convene a pre-session working group of five days' duration before each session of the Committee to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to the second and subsequent periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at the session.

12. The Committee, wishing to reflect in the lists of issues and questions to be prepared by the Working Group the ideas and views of various members of the Committee, decided that they should continue to submit to the secretariat draft questions on specific countries and articles of the Convention prior to the meeting of the Working Group.

13. Following the request put forward by the Committee, the secretariat prepared an analysis of each State party's report based on the information presented in the initial report and in subsequent reports, and using supplementary statistical data from other United Nations sources, in order to provide information in respect of questions to which answers were still pending. In compliance with the request, the analyses also drew on other reports about the country that were available, prepared by other human rights treaty bodies or

in accordance with conventions of the specialized agencies of the United Nations. The analyses also contained, where appropriate, information specifically provided by the specialized agencies of the United Nations and extracts from the statistics of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

14. The Committee had proposed five members to be part of the pre-session Working Group. The following four members were present:

Carlota Bustelo

Norma Monica Forde

Tatiana Nikolaeva

Ahoua Ouedraogo

The fifth member, Salma Khan, was not able to attend.

15. The pre-session Working Group held 10 meetings, including 3 drafting sessions, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 10 to 14 January 1994. Norma Monica Forde was elected as Chairperson.

16. According to the provisional agenda of the Committee (CEDAW/C/1994/1), the Working Group had to prepare lists of issues and questions for seven countries: Australia, Barbados, Colombia, Ecuador, Japan, New Zealand and Senegal.

17. For the preparation of the lists, the Working Group had before it the reports of the seven countries listed above; the general guidelines regarding the form and contents of periodic reports (CEDAW/C/7); the general recommendations adopted by the Committee; and the draft lists of issues and questions received from six members of the Committee. Further reference materials included the declarations, reservations, objections and notifications of the withdrawal of reservations relating to the Convention (CEDAW/SP/1994/2); the analyses, prepared by the secretariat, of the second periodic reports of Australia, Ecuador, Japan, New Zealand and Senegal; the combined second and third periodic reports of Barbados and Colombia and the third periodic reports of Ecuador and Japan, as well as information material received from non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

18. In preparing the lists of issues and questions, the pre-session Working Group followed the suggestion of the Committee to concentrate on a limited number of questions, to focus on analytical and qualitative aspects rather than on specific questions and to underline the achievements, remaining obstacles and matters in respect of which further information should be provided. The Working Group endeavoured to include questions that reflected, as far as possible, the Committee's more general concerns as they applied to the report under consideration.

19. As in previous years, the Working Group allocated to each of its members the main responsibility for and coordination of the preparation of a preliminary list of issues and questions on one or two countries. Each draft was subsequently discussed, revised and amended.

20. The lists of issues and questions drawn up by the Working Group are contained in the report of the pre-session Working Group (CEDAW/C/1994/CRP.2), which the Committee had before it. The Working Group, as authorized by the Committee, transmitted each list of issues and questions directly to the State party concerned on 14 January 1994.

21. The Working Group paid tribute to and recognized the value of the work done by NGOs in providing additional information material. The Working Group commented on the length of some reports and the problems related to the often late submission of reports by some countries.

F. Organization of work

22. The Committee considered its organization of work (CEDAW/C/1994/CRP.1) at its 233rd session.

G. Composition of and organization of work of the working groups

23. At its 233rd and 238th meetings on 17 and 19 January 1994, the Committee agreed on the composition of its two standing Working Groups: Working Group I to consider and suggest ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee and Working Group II to consider ways and means of discharging its responsibilities under article 21 of the Convention in particular through its consideration of articles 7 and 8.

24. Working Group I was composed of the following members of the Committee: Emna Aouij, Dora Bravo Nuñez de Ramsey, Liliana Gurdulich de Correa, Norma Monica Forde, Zagorka Ilic, Pirkko Anneli Mäkinen, Elsa Victoria Muñoz-Gomez, Tatiana Nikolaeva, Ahoua Ouedraogo, Lin Shangzhen, Kongit Sinegiorgis, Mervat Tallawy and Rose N. Ukeje.

25. Working Group II was composed of the following members of the Committee: Charlotte Abaka, Gül Aykor, Carlota Bustelo Garcia del Real, Silvia Rose Cartwright, Ivanka Corti, Evangelina Garcia-Prince, Salma Khan, Teresita Quintos-Deles and Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling.

26. At its 237th meeting on 20 January 1994, the Committee also decided to organize Working Group III to deal with issues concerning the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights. Working Group III was composed of the following members of the Committee: Silvia Rose Cartwright, Ivanka Corti, Norma Monica Forde, Zagorka Ilic, Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling, Kongit Sinegiorgis and Mervat Tallawy.

Working Group I

27. The Committee agreed on the following draft programme of work for Working Group I:

(a) Reservations to the Convention;

(b) Adequate meeting time to consider reports of States parties;

(c) Overdue reports;

(d) Secretariat servicing of the Committee;

(e) Venue of the session;

(f) Review of the rules of procedure;

(g) Formulation of Committee comments on the reports of States parties;

(h) Organization of the fourteenth session of the Committee;

(i) Reports to be considered at the fourteenth session;

(j) Provisional agenda for the fourteenth session.

Working Group II

28. The Committee agreed on the following draft programme of work for Working Group II:

(a) Analysis of articles 7 and 8 of the Convention;

(b) Compendium of the achievements of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Working Group III

29. The Committee agreed on the following draft programme of work for Working Group III:

(a) Relations with the Centre for Human Rights:

(i) Next meeting of the Human Rights Committee;

(ii) Appointment of the official rapporteur on violence;

(iii) Plan of action of the Centre for Human Rights;

(iv) Human rights education (reply to Mr. Fall);

(v) Issues to be dealt with at the next Meeting of Chairpersons;

(vi) Improvement of cooperation between human rights committees and their secretariats;

(b) Input (suggestions) to the International Conference on Population and Development;

(c) Discussion on the input to the World Summit for Social Development;

(d) Feasibility of drafting an optional protocol.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/45/38), paras. 28-31.